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HUNGARY'S AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN 1954

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The following survey summarizes the more important developments which took place in Hungarian agriculture during 1954.

Fertilizer Consumption

During the first 9 months of 1953, Hungarian agriculture [as a whole] used 14,665 carloads of artificial fertilizer. During the same period of 1954, use increased 60 percent to 23,740 carloads. During the same period the quantity of fertilizer used by independent peasants showed an increase of 227.5 percent. Currently there are 50 soil testing laboratories operating under the MTS.

Bread-grain Production

Bread-grain production remained below the average, partly because of the severe drought during the fall of 1953. Bekes, Csongrad, Bacs, Baranya, Tolna, and Somogy megyek were especially affected. Another reason was the lack of interest on the part of the peasants in planting grain. This situation has been improved by a recent decree of the Council of Ministers, according to which, beginning 1 January 1955, the farmers will receive 10 kilograms of bran, free, for every quintal of bread-grain surrendered. This year, bread-grain was planted earlier and in larger amounts than in 1953. Currently, due to good weather and improved work methods, the fall crops are developing satisfactorily.

The area of land planted in rice increased 20 times between 1942 and 1953. In 1954, this area increased by another 25,000 cadastral yokes [35,000 acres].

Livestock

Although there are 200,000 more horned cattle now than in 1938, the increased number still fails to meet current needs. Also, the proportion of dairy cattle is small and represents only 42 percent of the cattle stock instead of the 50 percent prescribed by the plan. Dairy results are poor. It is true that some dairymen have reached a yearly average of 4,000-5,000 liters of milk per cow, that the average daily milk yield per cow in the producer cooperatives increased from 5 to 7 liters, and that production for the country as a whole increased 10 percent over last year and reached the average for 1938. However, the average for the country is still inadequate. Therefore, one of the most important problems is to increase milk production and to assure that all cows produce at least 3,000 liters per year. The average weight of steer and the quality of their meat also need improvement.

The fight against sterility is showing good results. More than 40,000 cows have been tested free of charge and many thousands have been cured. The practice of artificial insemination is also showing a satisfactory growth.

The hog stock increased by one million, that is, 18.9 percent as compared with 1953. Currently, the hog stock numbers over 5.5 million and exceeds the plan goal set for the end of 1956.

The development of the horse stock is aided by the interest shown by foreign countries in Hungarian horse breeding. A large number of horses will be exported in the coming year.

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The results of higher prices for wool is reflected in the development of sheep breeding. This year, the producer cooperatives reached the 1956 goal of average shearing of 3.8 kilograms. The 1954 average for the country was 3.5 kilograms. The progress in sheep-farming is partially due to the work of the artificial insemination stations. At present, 90 state farms have such stations and recently 30 producer cooperatives asked permission to establish them. A large number of rams have been imported from the USSR and the GDR to improve the quality of the sheep stock.

In poultry stock, the 1956 goal of 20 million was reached in 1954. This year, the hatching stations gave more than 12 million baby chickens from blood-tested eggs to the producer cooperatives and independent farmers for further breeding.

Fodder Production

Little progress was made in alfalfa production, partly due to the rainy spring. The alfalfa crop for the coming year does not look promising. Polenization was poor and so was the seed crop. This made the amount of seed lost twice as serious. For example, in Baranya Megye, 400 cadastral yokes [568 acres] of alfalfa had not been threshed by mid November, causing a loss of 20-25 percent. Other fodder crops are developing satisfactorily. For example, the red clover crop this year is nearly twice the amount of last year's.

The corn crop was satisfactory this year. The producer cooperatives and state farms produced 70-80 percent more corn than in 1953. The average for the country is close to 30-40 quintals per cadastral yoke. The good results are largely due to improvement in plant care.

Hungary has ensiled more fodder this year than any other People's Democracy, but the quality of the ensilage is unsatisfactory. The amount of fodder grown for ensiling is still small. In many places there is also a shortage of ensiling pits.

About 10 percent of the country's pasture land was fertilized, and the weeds were destroyed on 80 percent of the pastures. In general, the development of fodder production was good in 1954.

Fruits and Grapes

In 1954, there has been a significant increase in fruit and grape production. In spite of a shortage of apple, apricot, cherry, and peach saplings, approximately 141 percent more fruit trees were planted in an area of 9,500 cadastral yokes [13,490 acres] than in the previous year. The independent farmers planted fruit trees on 3,000 cadastral yokes [4,260 acres] as compared with 800-1,000 cadastral yokes [1,136-1,420 acres] in 1953. Currently, five times as many saplings are available than planned at a price of 8-10 forints each. The producer cooperatives in Szabolcs Megye planted winter apple trees on 1,000 cadastral yokes [1,420 acres]. Cherry and sour cherry trees were planted in the Tisza River area. In Budapest and its outskirts, the producer cooperatives planted 30,000 peach saplings.

To supply the increasing demand for saplings, the area used by the state farm nurseries was doubled. The producer cooperatives and villages gardening enterprises will be able to raise 1.5 million saplings in the new nurseries by 1957, as compared to the planned 500,000. Approximately 409 quintals of wild seed were collected. These plants will provide nearly 5 million grafts in 3-4 years.

The new vineyards planted in 1954, which were 130 percent of the amount planned, show good results only numerically. Because of poor methods of preparing soil and storing seeds, only 15-20 percent of the grapevines took root in the new vineyards of Bacs, Pest, and Csongrad megyek. In most places the plants were neglected and damaged by weeds and mildew. As a result, it was necessary in the fall to plow under the grapes which had been planted the previous spring.

Although the graft producers planted the required area in smooth vinestock, less than 15-20 percent of the planned amount was produced. Owing to the shortage of skilled labor and because the ministry diverted investments earmarked for this purpose to other uses, the necessary supports could not be erected. The spraying machines and dusters which should have been produced are also unavailable.

However, it is very encouraging that the productive grapes were given organic fertilizer twice, hoed three or four times, and sprayed six to fourteen times, depending on the area. As a result, the 1954 yield was one million quintals more than in 1953.

However, fruit and grape production is still below requirements, both in quantity and quality.

Mechanization of Agriculture

During 1954, fairly good results have been achieved in the mechanization of agriculture. By 30 November 1954, agriculture had received 2,085 G-35 tractors, 1,000 universal tractors, 300 "Zetor" tractors, 650 "Lanz B" tractors, 406 hauling tractors, 950 threshing machines, 350 combines, 414 binders, 2000 tractor plows, more than 10,000 horse plows, 769 horse-drawn mowers, 875 thirty-row sowing machines, 4,838 heavy harrows, 2,335 disk harrows, 2,090 carts, 200 fertilizer spreaders, 763 horse-drawn rakes, 3,056 spraying machines, and many other machines. It may be noted, however, that the production plans for tractors, plows, cultivators, and spraying machines were not fulfilled. There is a significant lag in the production of spare parts, and the quality of machinery needs much improvement.

Production of small machines and tools for the peasants increased, and 85 million forints more were spent on such products in 1954 than in 1953. However, the production plan for cart axles, pitch forks, and other important articles was not met.

Good results were achieved in the manufacture of new models of agricultural machinery. This year, 25 new prototypes were finished. Some of these are already in serial production. Among them are the grain spreader, which facilitates the handling of grain cut by a combine; the grain cleaner; the three-row sugar beet cultivator, which is pulled by either a Zetor or Lanz tractor; and the three-row turnip cultivator, which is pulled by a G-35 tractor.

The prototype of an "agricultural conveyor" has been completed. This machine will help with the loading or storing of sugar beets, potatoes, corn, etc. This fall, numerous Soviet silo combines, corn combines, and hemp harvesters were put to use. The prototype of a plow, which is especially adapted for use in poor sandy soil, has been finished and will be in serial production in 1955. The Mosonmagyarovar Machine Works has completed the prototype of a cam-roller sowing machine which has the advantage of sowing more evenly. Work was completed on the prototype for a flanking disk which will aid soil cultivation for fruit growing. Industry also produced 300-liter milk separators, copying a Soviet model.

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The Agricultural Machine Designing Office (Mezogeptervezo Iroda) has finished plans for a D-24 hammer grinder. The prototype of the SP grape sprayer, which can spray four or five rows at a time, has been completed.

The MTS performed three times as much work for the independent farmers in the first three quarters of this year as in the same period of 1953. From 1 January to 30 November 1954, tractors operated on 156,833 cadastral yokes [222,703 acres] more land than in the same period of 1953. This fall, 100,000 cadastral yokes [142,000 acres] more soil was deep-plowed than last fall.

There has been some reduction in the cost of MTS operation, but the machines are still not being utilized fully and maintenance is poor. Tractor idling due to mechanical causes dropped from 9 percent in 1953 to 8.1 percent in 1954.

The MTS must give more help to the producer cooperatives. In 1954, very little aid was given in plant care and stubble plowing, and because of a shortage of fodder harvesters no help was given in the harvesting of hay.

Potato and Vegetable Production

Potato and vegetable production failed to make progress between 1945 and 1953. In 1954, however, the area planted in potatoes increased significantly -- from 345,626 cadastral yokes [366,349 acres] to 409, 393 cadastral yokes [581,338 acres]. Since last year, the area planted in potatoes increased by 44 percent in Somogy Megye and 39 percent in Pest Megye.

Hungary's average potato production did not increase in 1954. Although it is 28 percent higher than the average for the last 5 years, it did not rise above last year's average of 55 quintals per cadastral yoke [1.42 acres]. The average could be three times higher; for example, the Dozsa Producer Cooperative in Hercegszanto had an average of 150 quintals on 20 cadastral yokes [28.4 acres]. The lag is due to the poor quality of seed potatoes. In the future, the producer cooperatives and independent farmers must improve the quality of their seed potatoes and also should use vegetable fertilizer.

The vegetable yield improved in quality and quantity within the last year. This is partly due to rotation of crops. The area planted in vegetables, as well as the average production, has increased. The 1954 average production of onions was 50 quintals per cadastral yoke, as compared to 30 quintals in 1953. The area planted in tomatoes increased by 2,000 cadastral yokes [2,840 acres] and the average yield per cadastral yoke increased by 10 quintals over 1953. Three thousand more cadastral yokes [4,260 acres] were planted in string beans than last year, and the average yield per cadastral yoke increased by 5 quintals.

Approximately 100,000 hotbed windows were delivered to producers; this is the principal reason there was no lag in vegetable and seedling production. Good results were obtained on the Uj Elet Producer Cooperative where 1,000 windows yielded an income of 120,000 forints. At Karcag, Tiszaors, and Czerkeszollo, construction of a total 26,000 square meters of hotbed windows has been started. Despite the fall drought and a severe winter, vegetable production was sufficient to cover domestic requirements and to triple the supply planned for export.

Although the present vegetable production is good, there are some faults to be corrected. With irrigation and mechanization, the supply could be greatly increased. Unfortunately, the irrigated area did not increase this year over last year, and the supply of sowing and planting machines is insufficient. The organization of special MTS was not accomplished, and special techniques for soil and plants were not worked out.

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Party Work

Many of the good results in the development of agriculture were due to the work of the village Communists and party organs, largely as a result of the improvement of the village party policy.

In this connection, let us consider an article by Lajos Acs, member of the Political Committee, which appeared in Tartos Bekeert, Nepi Demokraciaert (For a Lasting Peace, for a People's Democracy), on 14 November 1954. Acs wrote:

"Within half a year, from January to June 1953, about 1,000 party cadres went to the rural areas. It is of special significance that many politically advanced Communists came to the jaras party committees to act in the capacity of first secretaries: 30 from Budapest, 25 from the Party Academy, and 40 from the megye centers. (There are 138 jarasok in Hungary.) Six months ago, only a few jarasok had first secretaries who had completed one or 2 years at the Party Academy. Now, as a result of the regrouping of cadres, most first jaras secretaries have this qualification. The Central Committee was also careful to see that the majority of these first secretaries had agricultural training. Even second and third secretaries in the jaras party committee are now usually trained in agriculture, and many are completing correspondence courses at agricultural technical schools, academies, or universities."

Some results of this new policy can be seen in Csongrad Megye. According to Karoly Nemeth, first secretary of the Csongrad Megye party committee, one of the party secretaries of each jaras committee devotes all his work to matters pertaining to MTS. These men are well trained and have studied at agricultural academies or at the Agricultural University. There is an instructor in every jaras to improve the work of the party. Skilled party workers have been sent from the megye committee to the jaras committees in order to strengthen the jarasok, and they have taken an active part in establishing local Patriotic People's Front committees. According to Nemeth, the Megye party committee considers its main task to be to strengthen the rural party network.

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